



The Lion's Face

Newsletter of Clan Farquharson in the United Kingdom

www.farquharson-clan.co.uk

Winter Edition 2011



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Chief's Message

Greetings to you all! As I write it is mid-winter, one of the coldest we have experienced in the UK for many years, especially in Scotland. This follows last year, one of the warmest ever recorded according to meteorological records. Turbulent times indeed, and a reminder perhaps to us that if we are to survive such turbulent extremes, we must hold together as we do in clan kinship. At this particular time, our thoughts go out to those of our clansmen who may have been stranded amidst the floods of biblical proportions that have enveloped parts of Brisbane and Queensland. We offer our prayers for your safety through this awesome ordeal.

We are now looking forward to our August Gathering, which will run for a full week from Saturday 6th to Saturday 13th August with a range of events which we hope to be attractive and convenient for many of you. This year the Gathering will feature our newly acquired piper's banner, which will, we trust be fully restored ready for presentation and installation at Braemar Castle.

We are also looking forward to our annual outing, again to the beauty of the Invercauld Estate. Fingers crossed for a for a fine day amidst the glorious breathtaking mountain scenery of Loch Callater on Invercauld. Included also are both the Aboyne and Ballater Games, and much else. I hope we have a good turnout, and I greatly look forward to being with you in our heartland.

Ceaud Mile Falte!



Alwyne Farquharson of Invercauld

President's Message (Review of 2010)

In May Joan and I drove to Worthing, for the get-together at the Beach Hotel, which included a committee meeting followed by lunch, both organised by the indomitable Val Farquharson. The highlight of the committee meeting was the arrangement by Val for printing of the 'Lion's Face' in booklet form, at a very competitive price. This format will be used for mailing and electronic distribution. Other matters discussed included the web-site, and arrangements for the gathering at Ballater in August.

Lunch was a very welcoming and friendly affair. Past President Andrew Farquharson very kindly provided us with splendid overnight hospitality and a fine view of the Isle of Wight from the highpoint of his farm near Worthing.

On the 7th August, Joan and I co-hosted a tent, at the Aboyne Games, with David and Carolyn Irvine of Drum. David is the 26th chief of that ilk. We had a very good attendance

including several clan members, notably Sir Angus and Lady Alison Farquharson, my cousin Maureen and partner Brian from Auld Earn, and all the way from Aix en Provence the charming Marie-Clotilde Escalle. Especially gratifying was the presence of our son Jim and his family.

Although only 5 years old, William Farquharson a grandson of Angus and Alison distinguished himself by winning a race! Not only that, but he repeated his success some 3 weeks later in Strathdon, at the Lonach games!!

On the following Wednesday, the car was loaded with tent and poles tables and chairs, display boards, banner and pole, boxes of wine and soft drinks, kilts and clothes etc, Clan books and documents. Not without some difficulty we managed to squeeze in too! With groaning springs we set off for Ballater, and arrived at a damp field, to find plenty of willing helpers to pitch the tent. Afterwards we had planned to eat at the Station Café, but found it closed at 6pm! Undaunted we repaired to the Glen Aden Hotel ,where we spent an enjoyable evening.

Next day dawned dull and damp at times. To our relief the tent was still standing. Franco our chef had arrived, and the tables and chairs hired from Turriff Marquees were located in the secretary's tent! Joan was then very busy setting out and laying the tables before others arrived, needless to say she did a grand job! About mid-day the rest of the Clan started to arrive, they included Sharon Farley and Roxanna Vuskalns from the USA, Stewart and Betty; Gordon and Maureen; Gordon and Jane, Ian and Jane and Ian's brother Paul, Val and John; Margaret Finlay; Alan Caig, Andrew and Emma; Michael and Jane Hill and Ansgar and Christine from Germany. Later we were joined by Andy and Linda Forbes-Hill, very good friends of Joan and myself, and together we enjoyed a splendid lunch, freshly prepared by Franco. After lunch the rain clouds dispersed and the sun graced us with its presence for the rest of the day.

At 1445, preceded by the Ballater and District Pipe Band the Chief was escorted into the ground to take his seat as patron of the Games in the grandstand. The Chief was accompanied of course by Patricia, his wife, and later in the day they visited the Clan tent. Other visitors came from all over – Australia, the USA, Latvia, France and Belgium, such is the power of this small Deeside valley and the pull of history., ‘ yet still the blood is strong the heart is Highland’.

The Chief and Madam Farquharson were escorted to their car by the Clan led by Stewart carrying the banner, and followed by the band, which included Ansgar! The tent was dismantled and packed away until next year, following which most of the party retreated to the ‘GlenAden’, where to more music from the pipes and drums (including Ansgar) a fine occasion drew to a pleasant end.

And so to the hills.....It is hard to find words to do justice to as memorable day as Friday the 13th. The party met at the Invercauld Estate offices at Keiloch, where we were

welcomed by the estate factor Simon Blackett, who introduced the archivist, Sheila Sedgewick. Sheila fascinated us all by some of the results of her work at Invercauld. Amongst the items was a document dating from the 15th century and a piece of linen tartan said to have been worn at Culloden in 1746. This was followed by an equally absorbing talk by Simon relating the complexities of managing such a huge and disparate estate as Invercauld.

Then we set off in a caravan of Land-Rovers and at first the ground rose through the wooded glen of the Slugan burn. Beyond a deer fence the heather and grasses were noticeably less luxuriant and when the watershed (750m) overlooking the river Gairn was reached the vegetation was stunted. Before us was the vast bulk of Ben Avon (pron. Aan), but the cloud base was low obscuring the summit. At this point Neil Bain, very much a local guide, told tales of mystery – who was the man whose headless corpse was found in the upper reaches of the Gairn? The site of an ancient distillery was pointed out- it was illegal of course, but so remote it ran little risk of being detected!

Following the Gairn, we descended close to Loch Builg, where according to the Chief, arctic char are to be found. Red grouse were often seen and a few red deer were reported. En route we came up with three men working at the side of the track, whereupon the Chief said ‘stop the car’ and opened the window and the look of sheer delight on the face of Jim Davidson the head ‘keeper on recognising his old laird, made one’s heart leap to see. Eventually the Gairn was crossed and Cairndavon Lodge and the portaloo were reached. Sadly only one room of the Lodge remained, but it contained a treasure in the form of a beautiful mural painted by Philip Erskine in 1967 an officer of the Royal Guard when the Queen mother rented the property. And then again in 1998 when the original had been vandalised the artist returned from South Africa to repeat his master piece After admiring the art, we were fascinated by more accounts by Neil Bain – as a boy he had lived at the Lodge- where his mother had been cook/housekeeper and in the summer it took 20 minutes to cycle the seven miles to school, but over an hour to return home. In the winter he lived in Braemar! We were then treated to a first class picnic, prepared by Simon Blackett and his family, in particular Annabel, she of the mouth-watering chocolate brownies, Simon’s daughter, who was with the party.

The caravan set off following the Gairn, with fine views of Lochnagar, the skies having cleared. Behind us on a trailer was the precious portaloo! The terminus was Keiloch. It was a wonderful and unforgettable experience.

Saturday 14th August. The AGM was held in the back room of the Glen Aden hotel. Tea or coffee and biscuits were available The Chief opened the meeting, welcoming all and congratulating Sir Angus on being granted a knighthood and drawing attention to the winning exploits of Tom Farquharson at Wimbledon. There was a good deal of discussion on the continuing need to recruit new members, and to make our activities more attractive to the young, although the membership over the past 12 months had increased a little. The meeting

was pleased to hear from Treasurer Gordon that our finances were in a healthy state –I thought he would make a better chancellor of the exchequer than the present incumbent!!

Andrew had made great progress in bringing the website up to date, with the help of Morag, who had originally designed the site.

As president, as time was pressing, I passed up the privilege of addressing the meeting, but I wish now to record my thanks to all the officers and committee and all others who had helped to make a most successful year of 2010, and also to make special mention of my wife Joan, without whose support, energy and encouragement, I would have been at a loss. I am pleased to relate that all the officers and committee were noble enough to volunteer for re-election and were appointed en bloc.



At the committee meeting that followed the most interesting item for discussion, concerned a pipe banner bearing the arms of Invercauld, which was to be sold by auction at Edinburgh the following week. The banner was estimated to be over 100years old. There was unanimous approval that we should bid for the relic up to the sum of £600, but an individual who wished to remain anonymous, volunteered to provide a further £400, if required.

The committee, like the AGM were very appreciative of the efforts of Simon Blackett, who with help from estate workers and family, had made our trip into the hills, so hugely enjoyable. Gordon, who had organised the event from the Clan's side also deserved many congratulations.

The Clan dinner was held that evening in the Albert hall. A good time was had by all, the Chief and his party were piped in by Martin Johnson, Angela and her team from the Glen Aden again worked a miracle with the catering considering the facilities, or lack of them in the hall! I thanked Andrew the farmer for organising the event, and many others, but forgot to mention Joan, for which omission I have been sentenced to 1000 lashes and to be deported back to England – ah well I live in hope of a reprieve!!

Sunday the 15th was blessed with the most beautiful weather. A few of us gathered at the Cairn na Cuihne at 1430 hrs, the remainder of the Clan party having to catch 'planes, trains or drive many miles. The Chief said a few words, and read the following quite emotive prayer:-

May the Lord support us all the day long,
Till the shades lengthen, and the evening comes,

And the busy world is hushed
And the fever of life is over
And our work is done.
Then in His mercy
May he give us a safe lodging
And a Holy rest
And peace at the last,
Amen

Prior to our meeting Sir Angus accompanied by Alan Caig had laid a stone, from Tillygarmond, on the Cairn, in memory of his friend, fellow clansman and predecessor as Lord Lieutenant of Aberdeenshire, Colin Farquharson of Whitehouse.

Everyone there thought this not only a most fitting tribute to a distinguished clansman, but it also created a continuing use for an ancient monument, not called the cairn of remembrance for nothing.

Saturday 4th. September saw Joan and I at the Royal Braemar Gathering, having met Alan Caig at Ballater on the way. We were blessed by fine, warm weather and also by an early visit from the Chief and Madam Farquharson, who greatly admired the pipe banner, collected by Alan from Edinburgh and carried by him to Braemar.(purchase cost £265). Later the same day the banner was inspected by Gordon Casely, a piper in the Lonach band, but also an expert in Scottish heraldry. The relic was identified as being a marital banner of James Farquharson (b1808) and his spouse, Janet Hamilton Dundas. James was the 12th. Laird of Invercauld, the banner was not their only shared interest, they had nine sons and four daughters!! The plans for the banner are that it should be renovated and preserved as far as possible and formally presented to the custodians of Braemar Castle, as part of our 10th anniversary programme at Ballater, in 2011. Once again there were many visitors from overseas who visited our display. Her Majesty left just before the Gathering finished and she waved to meI think.

The Chief let it be known that next week he was driving Pat and himself to the South of France from Norfolk not a bad effort from a man in his 92nd. Year! When asked , Pat said she did drive ‘but Alwyne doesn’t like me to!’ ‘I keep look out!’

Looking forward to seeing you all again in 2011, the 10th Anniversary of Clan Farquharson UK.

Alistair Farquharson – President

“The Lion’s Face” Where does the name of our Newsletter come from?

We first started using the name for the 4th edition in the Autumn of 2002. Before that we simply referred to it as the Newsletter.

‘Why is it called The Lion’s Face’ many ask?here’s the story.

There is a designated footpath from Braemar to the Lion’s Face, and there are a few other footpaths to the west of the site which may be used. Creag Clunie and the Lion’s Face can also be accessed from the A93 on the northern boundary.



Probably the easiest way to approach the Lions Face is as follows. If you drive to Braemar on the A93 from the East (Invercauld and Ballater etc) there is a road, Castleton Place, to the left immediately after the Invercauld Arms Hotel. Go up this road past the Fire Station on the left up to the junction with Hillside Drive. There is a bench and gate to look out for. Park the car somewhere here and head through the

gate and follow the sign which should take you straight ahead, NOT to the left. From here it is not well signposted but after 10 minutes up a gentle hill through the woods you get to a bench; keep on the right fork path. The one to the left takes you up to the top of Creag Choinnich from where you can enjoy wonderful views of the village of Braemar, Braemar Castle and Invercauld Castle.

The right fork brings you to the Lions Face but you will struggle to work it out. It derived its name from being viewed from a distance across the Dee. Since then, trees and scrub have grown obscuring the view of what resembled a ‘Lion’s Face’!

The Lion’s Face is a near vertical calcareous outcrop, with clefts and under-hangs. It is an outstanding area for lichens, which grow in shaded and sheltered habitats on the rock. The outcrop supports a viable population of the elm gyalecta lichen (*Gyalecta ulmi*), which is rare and



declining internationally and is listed on Schedule 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981)

You can continue the walk to Braemar Castle but afterwards you will have to walk along the main road to get back to your car. Happy walking!

Written by Andrew Farquharson - October 2010

Meet Tom Farquharson



In June 2010 at Wimbledon, Tom Farquharson was on his way to winning the boys' doubles title with Liam Broady on the hallowed lawns of SW19.

“I know what I have started is a tough road but if you are ready for it, then you can be successful,” said the 18-year-old.

If Farquharson can make an impact at that level, then Challenger tournaments — for more cash and higher ranking points — become a possibility. The ultimate aim, of course, is the lucrative but hugely-competitive main ATP Tour, which includes the four Grand Slams; Wimbledon, US Open, Australian Open and French Open.

For now, though, the focus for the Sutton-based player is much lower. As part of Team AEGON, Farquharson receives funding from the Lawn Tennis Association but he still needs the continuing support of his family. The search for a sponsor has been intensified now he can put “Wimbledon champion” next to his name.

“It's great to have Andy Murray flying the flag for Britain, following on from Tim Henman and Greg Rusedski, and it gives you something to aim for. Stepping up to seniors you need to be stronger both physically and mentally and I believe I am capable of doing that.”

Farquharson is one of a growing number of British players who are training away from the National Tennis Centre in Roehampton, but who still receive central funding from the LTA. He is based in Aix-en-Provence, working with brother Sandy in the South of France.

When the Chief heard about the Wimbledon success, he wrote and congratulated Tom and received a delightful reply.

The Chief sent Christmas greetings to Tom, and we received the following message and information about next season.

Tom wrote – “I'm very interested about the newsletter (the Lion's Face) and would be honoured to be included in it.

For 2011, I'm going to be playing on the Men's Circuit and have already picked up two ranking points from 2010. I plan to start playing tournaments on the 3rd of January in Britain-these include two 'ATP Futures men's events'. I then plan on going to France in February to train in Marseille, and then to play two more ATP Futures men's events. Afterwards, I return to Britain to play two Futures Men's events and an ATP Challenger event (a level above the Futures event). Those are my plans up until April. Due to the Men's Circuit scheduling, it is difficult to plan further ahead than April I'm afraid. However, I know after April, I will be playing Men's Futures in Europe (I just don't know where yet).”

Good luck Tom for 2011. Please keep in touch with us.

What fun it was this year! 2010 Gathering reflections by Jane Farquharson (Guildford).



We usually attend the Gathering by flying to Aberdeen and hiring a boring Euro-Box. This year was different as we were to go off-road around the Invercauld Estate. So, we hired a real Land Rover, a 9 seat LWB Defender. Gordon had injured his knee, and couldn't manage the heavy clutch, so it was down to me to be chauffeur for the week.

Things didn't start too well, within 5 miles of Dyce (Aberdeen Airport), the windscreen wipers failed, and I had to negotiate the traffic back into Aberdeen to swap to another Defender. At least it was a better newer model, and we were all set for the really fun part, the estate tour

After coffee and a briefing at the Estate office, we piled into a train of 4x4s. I had a precious cargo including the Chief behind me, and President Alistair and wife Joan in the boot. We negotiated hills and fords, frequently needing to select low range for the climbs. The scenery was stunning, and the Chief's knowledge and anecdotes kept us informed and amused. Simon Blackett (the estate Factor) and his daughter did us proud with the food.
Jane Farquharson.

Gathering 2010 Report by Roxana Brown Vuskalas

The 2010 Gathering was a smaller and more intimate affair than last year when we combined it with the “Homecoming”. Nevertheless, for those attending it was a delightful occasion, providing some special memories.

Sadly, I had to stay in Braemar as the Loriston Hotel in Ballater had closed. This meant I had to do a bit of commuting. The 12th August was the Ballater Games, and although I couldn't help pitch the Clan tent, I got there in good time to meet everyone. This year we had hot food instead of the cold buffet. The smell wafting over the games field wetted our appetites. In spite of the chilly weather, the games were well attended, and some of our Clansmen supported the Chief and Madame Farquharson as they marched in with the Queens Guard at 3.15 pm to take their place at the Games.



On Friday we all gathered at the Invercauld Estate office for our tour of the estate. For many it was the first time we could congratulate Sir Angus Farquharson of Finzean on his well deserved Knighthood. Angus and Alison went on the tour with us, and drove one of the Land Rovers.



Inside the Lodge, Sheila Sedgewick explained to us her amazing work sorting and cataloguing artefacts and family history. Simon Blackett then gave us a information about the Estate with lots of statistics and explanation about how it all works. It is certainly a challenging enterprise.

We then boarded the 4x4s and set out, first on paved roads, and then quickly on to rough tracks. We stopped after about an hour atop a hill where there was a weather station and a university

agricultural experiment. Neil Bain, our guide explained where we were and told some stories of the area. En route to Corndavon Lodge, the Chief's Land Rover stopped so he could speak with some of the estate workers he recognised. They were really surprised and delighted to see the Chief. At the Lodge we had a delightful picnic and respite from bouncing over the rough terrain. Inside the Lodge, Neil Bain explained about the famous mural, the damage and that the original artist has restored it over 3 days. After lunch, we had 3 more miles cross country, and then found the main road to get back to the estate office for thanks and farewells.



For me this was the highlight of the 2010 Gathering....it was wonderful to be in the centre of Farquharson country.

Saturday was time for the AGM and later the formal dinner in the Albert Hall in Ballater. It was a lovely evening as usual, and I was so grateful to the Chief and Madame Farquharson for taking me back to Braemar.

On Sunday a small group visited the Cairn. This is always a solemn and thoughtful moment. The Chief said a few moving words, and welcomed us all back for the 2011 Gathering. This will be the 10th anniversary of the reawakening of the Clan Farquharson Association in the United Kingdom.

Roxana Brown Vuskalas

Clan Matters

Membership Secretary Val Farquharson

To keep our data-base of email addresses up to date please send an email to our membership secretary Val at farquharson32@btinternet.com

Website

Don't forget to visit the Clan Farquharson website www.farquharson-clan.co.uk

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A poem from Alwyne Farquharson of Invercauld

Clan Farquharson from Findla Mor descend,
Motto: 'I FEAR NAE FOE, I FORCE NAE FRIEND',
Tartan: Blue, black, red, yellow, striped on green,
Hark! Battle slogan echoes – 'Carn nba Cuimhne!
By belt and buckle girt in fealty
For crest a demi Lion guardant see,
In dexter paw a sword from sheath drawn free,
For bonnet badge a sprig o' Scots fir tree.
Chief's bannered Arms guard Wildcats fierce of glare,
'Touch not the cat then bot a glove' – Beware!

More images from the 2010 Gathering and the tour of the Invercauld Estate



